

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (previously presented) Stable slurries for use in the manufacturing of shells for investment casting of metals and for use in the manufacturing of mould and core coatings for metal casting, comprising

- a silica or alumina sol;
- a mineral in finely divided particles including trivalent or tetravalent cations; and
- at least 0.01% by weight of a water soluble salt to convert the trivalent or tetravalent cations to moieties that are unable to cause flocculation of the slurries.

Claim 2 (cancelled)

Claim 3. (currently amended) The slurries according to claim 1, wherein cationic component is one or more of iron, aluminum or zirconium compounds presented in the mineral or in water, and wherein the compounds comprise ~~ferrous chromite, olivine (mixed magnesium and iron^{II} silicates), norite, and ferruginous mullite (aluminum silicate).~~

Claims 4 – 8 (cancelled)

Claim 9. (currently amended) The slurries according to claim 1, wherein the water soluble salt is selected from one or more of an alkali phosphate, ~~including trisodium or tripotassium,~~ or a reducing agent including sodium or potassium hypophosphite; and wherein the water soluble salt is added to the silica or alumina sol prior to the silica or alumina sol being mixed with the mineral.

Claims 10 – 15 (cancelled)

Claim 16. (previously presented) Stable slurries for use in the manufacturing of shells for investment casting of metals and for use in the manufacturing of mould and core coatings for metal casting, comprising

an alumina sol;

a mineral in finely divided particles including trivalent or tetravalent cations; and

at least 0.01% by weight of a water soluble salt to convert the trivalent or tetravalent cations to moieties that are unable to cause flocculation of the slurries.

Claim 17. (previously presented) The slurries according to claim 1, wherein the mineral is one or more of ferrous chromite, olivine (mixed magnesium and iron^{II} silicates), norite, and ferruginous mullite (aluminum silicate).

Claim 18. (previously presented) The slurries according to claim 9, wherein the mineral is one or more of ferrous chromite, olivine (mixed magnesium and iron^{II} silicates), norite, and ferruginous mullite (aluminum silicate).

Claim 19. (previously presented) The slurries according to claim 9, wherein the water soluble salt is sodium or potassium hypophosphite.

Claim 20. (previously presented) The slurries according to claim 1, wherein the mineral is one or more of ferrous chromite, olivine (mixed magnesium and iron^{II} silicates), norite, and ferruginous mullite (aluminum silicate) and the water soluble salt is sodium or potassium hypophosphite.

Claim 21. (new) The slurries according to claim 1, wherein the alkali phosphate is trisodium or tripotassium.

Claim 22. (new) Stable slurries for use in the manufacturing of shells for investment casting of metals and for use in the manufacturing of mould and core coatings for metal casting, consisting essentially of:

 a colloidal silica;

 a ferruginous mineral; and

 at least 0.01% by weight of trisodium phosphate.